

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

May 1, 2014

Present:

**​Carl Brunetti​​Mike
Babbitt​​Hagop Jawharjian​​Bob Turner
​Rhonda Lacombe​Maria Marcello​​Paul
Deutsch​​​Richard Foster​
​Paul DiDomenico​Bill McManus**

Absent:

​Bill DiBiasio​​

Call to Order

The meeting began at 7:32 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of April 17th were distributed for review.

Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Mike Babbitt to approve the minutes.

The minutes were approved as amended by a vote of 8-0 with Paul DiDomenico and Maria Marcello abstaining as they were not present on April 17th.

Correspondence

There was correspondence from the School Committee Chair regarding a petition that was being passed around to add funds to the education budget at the Financial Town Meeting.

The Town Clerk noted that there were 114 valid signatures from registered voters on the petition at the time that it was submitted.

There was a draft received from the Finance Director of the tax rate estimates which came out to an increase of a .01% based on calculations.

Public Comment

There were no public comments or questions at the time.

New Business

Review FY15 Budget

There was a petition submitted to increase the education budget by \$260,000 for health insurance and another \$240,000 to fund 2 additional teachers to relieve overcrowding in some of the lower grades.

School Committee Chair Kristine Donabedian noted that those numbers were based on the understanding that the schools would be able to go for a supplemental appropriation if needed for health care and that additional amount would become included in the maintenance of effort as long as the schools are left with a reasonable surplus for other unanticipated expenditures.

There were concerns from parents about the equitable division of those additional teachers, and there has been discussion of moving all Pre-Kindergarten classes to Northern including some bussing modifications to accommodate that. This would allow extra 1st Grade classrooms at Central and Lonsdale thereby alleviating overcrowding in that grade system-wide.

Pre-Kindergarten starts at age 3-4 and there is a small tuition charged for that.

The only thing needed to complete that addition would be the 2 teachers as well as 2 teachers' aides.

Those positions will be filled by reinstating employees who were given layoff notices.

The School Department is still waiting for enrollment numbers of the charter schools to determine the final classroom head counts once those adjustments are made.

Georgia Fortunato, Superintendent, noted that the .5 Social Worker position that was reduced in her original budget proposal was never in the recommendation because the School Department do not believe it is necessary, and they have had discussions with parents who have expressed their concerns about that line being adjusted.

The petition to add funds to the education budget will be recognized before the school operating budget in the order of the agenda for the Financial Town Meeting.

The School Committee has noted that they do not need the \$260,000 in additional funds for health care because they came to an agreement that they could go to a supplemental appropriation next year if they exceed the budget.

Therefore, the Budget Board anticipates that the School Committee will speak against the full petition on the floor of the Financial Town Meeting and the meeting will discuss and vote only upon the \$240,000, which includes salaries, benefits, incidentals, supplies, and anything else needed to add the 2 1st Grade classrooms.

It was noted that the voters cannot vote to add the teachers to the budget specifically, for example, but only the dollar amount which the School Committee then has the authority to allocate as they see fit.

Bob Turner made a motion, seconded by Hagop Jawharjian, to change the order of the agenda of the meeting to hold public comment before New Business was discussed.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public Comment

Joy Bolduc and Elaine Gugel thanked the School Committee, School Department and Budget Board for listening to parents as they came together to make their concerns heard, and that they were able to come up with a solution to classroom overcrowding.

Mike Babbitt made a motion, seconded by Bob Turner, to return to the regular order of the agenda.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

New Business

Prepare for FTM

The Budget Board discussed their individual responsibilities of the different parts of the budget so that any questions from the public will be answered.

The Budget Board discussed charter schools and the school surplus amounts expended over the past few years.

The Budget Board also discussed school capital including the Lonsdale Roof and High School Heating Element which might be done if needed as emergencies, and it was noted that the Budget Board disagrees with that because they believe those items should be put before them within the budget process and fully vetted out before they are completed.

The Budget Board discussed a press release that they plan to send out regarding their recommended budget and what taxpayers should expect at the Financial Town Meeting.

Adjourn

Richard Foster made a motion, seconded by Paul Deutsch, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.